HOKUSAI



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HOKUSAI

PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

IN THE

FREER GALLERY OF ART



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Freer Gallery of Art Washington, D. C.

Smithsonian Publication No. 4419 design by Frank Dobias

FOREWORD

In connection with the celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the Townsend Harris treaty with Japan, the Freer Gallery of Art is holding a special exhibition of paintings by the famous *ukiyoe* master Hokusai, who lived from 1760 to 1849. In the present booklet, well illustrated with paintings and drawings, you will find an excellent short account of Hokusai's life. This exhibition comes from the remarkably large holdings of this artist's work owned by the Freer Gallery of Art.

> A. G. Wenley, Director.

Freer Gallery of Art April 1960.

HOKUSAI

Two hundred years ago, in the ninth month of the tenth year of the Hōreki era, during the reign of the one hundred sixteenth Emperor of Japan, Tōhito, and the rule of the tenth Tokugawa Shōgun, Ieharu, a child was born in Edo, present-day Tokyo, who was destined to become one of the great artists of Japan. He is popularly known by the name Hokusai, although during his life he made use of approximately fifty pseudonyms. His fame rests more upon his acceptance abroad than in his homeland, for he was an artist of the *ukiyoe* or so-called "floating world" popular genre school of painting, which until recently was frowned upon by the traditional connoisseurs of Japan. The collectors of the western world, however, embraced the production of this school with intensity and sought Hokusai's work. Time has passed and the output of his brush, which was never at rest, has been spread throughout the world and has served as a source of inspiration to many artists.

One often enjoys reflecting on the life and times of a man who was so able to fire the imagination of others. A complete study of Hokusai's work is impossible in any single collection, for it comprises paintings, sketches, prints, books, and even some attempts at textile designs. The Freer Gallery of Art, however, is extremely fortunate in being the repository of the largest collection of paintings and drawings produced by Hokusai. It is only in this collection, or that of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts, that his development of an individual style and his skill in handling his brush can be carefully traced.

Who was Hokusai? These were the words that echoed on the lips of many of the artists on the Continent shortly after the discovery of a volume of Hokusai's Manga (printed Sketch Books) by the French engraver Bracquemond in 1856 in the shop of Delâtre, his

printer. The story is often related that pages of these books had been used as packing material in a shipment of ceramics from Japan to France. It is impossible to trace the veracity of the story; however, the desire for things Japanese rapidly caught hold, and by 1867 there already existed La Société Japonaise du Jinglar, composed of artists in France.

Hokusai was born into the Kawamura family in the area of Edo known as Honjo Warigesui, which was part of Katsushika District. in 1760. It is from this latter site that he selected one of the names he was to use. As often happened in Japan, when he was but four or five years old he was adopted into a family more able to provide for him in the future. This was the Nakajima family, and his new father, Ise, was a maker of mirrors. Japan at that time was experiencing an era of expanding prosperity and relative peace. The country had been united under the Tokugawa Shogunate, and, although it was an enforced rather than natural peace, it did permit the economic and social development of Japan. The craftsmen had found a place in society, and there was an ever-increasing demand for works of art to be supplied to the homes of the *nouveaux riches* and the travelers. The townsmen who could now afford art were interested in having the artists of the period portray the scenes familiar to them, such as those which occurred in everyday life, and especially desired representations of their favorite pleasures, the theatre and the courtesans. Thus ukiyoe painting came to flourish in the cities of Japan from the late seventeenth century on. Many great artists had preceded Hokusai, and he can almost be said to mark the last significant flowering of this style of painting prior to its demise.

The training that Hokusai underwent while a child in the household of the mirror maker proved valuable, for it put him in contact with the world of design and craftsmanship. When he was about fourteen, his education took another step forward and he was apprenticed to an unknown engraver. He was thus permitted to study the technique of carving wood blocks for prints. This gave him an advantage over his colleagues in later life, for few of them had been privileged to work in and understand the principal technique by which their artistic production would be reproduced. Hokusai's skill in handling line reflects that he was an apt pupil.

The next major development in the life of Hokusai was his entrance in 1778, at the age of eighteen, into the studio of the already established *ukiyoe* master Katsukawa Shunshō. It had always been a practice for a recognized artist to surround himself with students. If he found them acceptable, he would assign names to them and they would continue to work as his representatives. The name Shunshō gave to Hokusai was Shunrō, and he produced many prints in the style of his master. It is likely that, while in Shunsho's studio, he turned out the painting attributed to him of the *Courtesan Writing* (Fig. 2). It is almost a direct copy of a painting by his teacher, save for the addition of poetry and the deletion of two palanquin carriers. Hokusai's stay in the studio of Shunshō was not destined to last long, for an altercation occurred and in 1785 he left the protecting wing of the elder artist and changed his name to Sō Shunrō. It is from this period on that he began to develop an individual style.

Shortly after Hokusai set forth on his own, he took to using many pseudonyms in varying combinations. The one most commonly relied upon during his late twenties and through his thirties was that of Sōri. He had tired somewhat of the *ukiyoe* style and had gone out to learn more about traditional Japanese painting. He is reported to have studied with a Kanō master and certainly was acquainted with the Tosa style. The painting technique that most fascinated him during this period, however, was that of the Rimpa school, named after Kōrin, the great master of a decorative style of painting. Painters of this school relied upon the use of washes and also signed their compositions with large round seal marks. Hokusai was so influenced by this group that he elected to be the fourth generation Sōri and copied the seal and techniques of this school. *The Six Master Poets* (Fig. 4) was painted in that style; however, Hokusai was never able to divorce himself completely from ukiyoe. The influence of the print masters Shunshō, Utamarō, and Kiyonaga can be seen in a number of his paintings that bear the Sōri signature.

Prior to the year 1798, the artist had not made use of the name Hokusai. In that year it appeared on some illustrations for the book Dan to ka and became his most often used name, and the one by which he is known today. The pair of paintings of courtesans performing New Year's Rituals (Figs. 5, 6) bear the simple Hokusai signature and are in all likelihood products of his late thirties or early forties. He had forsaken the preceding style and had returned to the brilliant, opaque palette of the *ukiyoe* masters. He also had developed a canon for the female form. His girls all resemble each other in their features, and one speculates as to whether he used a model. They have rather stylized, long, squarish faces, and, on viewing them, one has the feeling that they are detached from reality and are truly of a "floating world." It is at this point of his development that he evidenced a growing concern for realism, such as in his handling of textiles. A mannerism began to appear in the musculature and in his articulation of the movements of figures.

Hokusai was a very prolific artist, and the demands upon him were great. He never permitted his art to stagnate, however, and often turned to experimentation and the creation of *tours de force*. In 1804 he executed a painting, some eighteen yards long and eleven yards wide, of the Patriarch Saint of Zen Buddhism, Daruma, in the compound of the Otowa Gorokuji Temple in Edo, and repeated the feat in Nagoya thirteen years later. The story is reported of his great success in a painting competition with the very popular artist Tani Bunchō (1764-1840), done on the command of the Shōgun Ienari. Hokusai's painting was titled *Maple Leaves Floating on the Tatsuta River*. To produce it, he took a long sheet of paper and with a broad brush painted a line to symbolize the river. After this was finished, he took a rooster and dipped its feet in red paint and let it walk across the painting. The shape of the rooster's tracks corresponded with those of maple leaves, and Ienari was startled by Hokusai's originality.

The same feminine ideal that so fascinated Hokusai when he was forty continued to occupy his mind during his fifties and sixties, as can be seen in his painting *Courtesan Making a New Year's Visit* (Fig. 5). His daughter, Oei, was very kind and of great solace to him in his later years. After her divorce from Yanagigawa Shigenobu, her father's pupil, she returned to her family home and cared for him. There has even been some speculation as to whether she served as his model. He had turned to using the names Taito and Iitsu in 1811, and there appeared an increasing tension and almost explosive nervousness about his line. This was especially noticeable in his portrayal of fabrics made of crepe. It almost served as a warning indication of the severe attack of palsy which was to strike the painter in 1829. But even this did not slacken his stubborn devotion to his art; he cured himself and continued to paint for another two decades.

Debt constantly plagued Hokusai, and as a result he was always on the move. In the eighty-nine years that he lived, he is reported to have changed his residence at least ninety-three times. He was quite obviously concerned about his family and their offspring. One grandson in particular was a cause of great sorrow, and Hokusai spent much of his earnings in assisting him out of debt. A more important reason for the artist's continuous financial embarrassment was his complete lack of interest in money. He loved and was married to his art; economics was not permitted to intrude or dampen his zeal. If it threatened, he just moved on.

As an artist, Hokusai recorded all that passed before his eyes and through his mind. In 1814 the first of his Manga (Sketch Books) appeared, and his paintings, prints, and sketches followed suit in representing every facet of life. He produced handscrolls such as the *Miscellaneous Studies* (Fig. 9) in which he skillfully portrayed the variety of sea life that abounds in the waters off Japan, as well as many of the legends of the land. He also commenced producing screens such as *The Twelve Months*, Six Views of the Tama River, and Country Scenes. These provided him with a larger format on which to represent nature as he saw it. It was during his late seventies and eighties that he became extremely conscious and justly proud of his venerable age. Most of the paintings he produced from the mid-1830's were inscribed with his age, such as his \mathcal{A} Wood Gatherer (Fig. 8), which was produced in the last year of his life, 1849. He now also often signed himself Gakyō Rōjin (The Old Man Mad about Painting). The majority of his sketches and drawings, including the eighty-nine designs now known of the series One Hundred Poems of the Master Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse (Figs. 26-29) date from these later years. The hundreds that he produced lead one to conclude that he felt an urgency to transfer everything to paper before his years on earth ran out.

The mark Hokusai left on the world was great and lives on until today. One of the finest summaries is his evaluation of his own work which can be found in his note written at the end of the FugakuHyakkei (One Hundred Views of Fuji). He wrote:

"Ever since the age of six, I have had a mania for drawing the forms of objects. Towards the age of fifty I published a very large number of drawings, but I am dissatisfied with everything which I produced before the age of seventy. It was at the age of seventy-three that I nearly mastered the real nature and form of birds, fish, plants, etc. Consequently, at the age of eighty, I shall have got to the bottom of things; at one hundred I shall have attained a decidedly higher level which I cannot define, and at the age of one hundred and ten every dot and every line from my brush will be alive. I call on those who may live as long as I to see if I keep my word. Signed, formerly Hokusai, now Gakyō Rōjin (The Old Man Mad about Painting)."

This great master died in the year 1849 on the eighteenth day of the fourth month and, although he physically did not achieve his goal of one hundred and ten years of life, his work has survived, and every dot and every line from his brush remain alive in testimony of his skill as one of the master draftsmen of all time.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1760 Born in the ninth month at Honjo, Warigesui, in Edo into the Kawamura family.
- *ca.* 1763 Adopted into the family of Nakajima Ise, a maker of mirrors.
- ca. 1773 Apprenticed to an unknown engraver of wood blocks.
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 - 1793 Studied the Kanö style of painting with Kanö Yüsen.
 - 1795 Used the name Sori.
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 - 1804 Painted large picture of Daruma at the Otowa Gorokuji Temple in Edo.
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 - 1812 Visited the Kyoto region.
 - 1814 First volume of the fifteen-volume set of *Manga* (Sketch Books) published.
 - 1817 Revisited the Kyoto region and stopped at Nagoya to paint large picture of Daruma.
 - 1820 Used the name litsu.
 - 1823 Began work on the noted *Thirty-six Views of Fuji* print series.
 - 1829 Suffered a severe attack of palsy.
 - 1833 Commenced placing his age on his paintings.
 - 1834 The illustrated book *A* Hundred Views of Fuji published. Moved to Uraga.
 - 1839 The print series titled One Hundred Poems of the Master Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse begun.
 - 1849 Died on the eighteenth day of the fourth month. His tomb is located in Tokyo at Seikyōji Temple in Asakusa, Nagayumi Chō.



98.110 1. Mount Fuji



03.128 2. COURTESAN WRITING







03.52





8. A Wood Gatherer OH 182



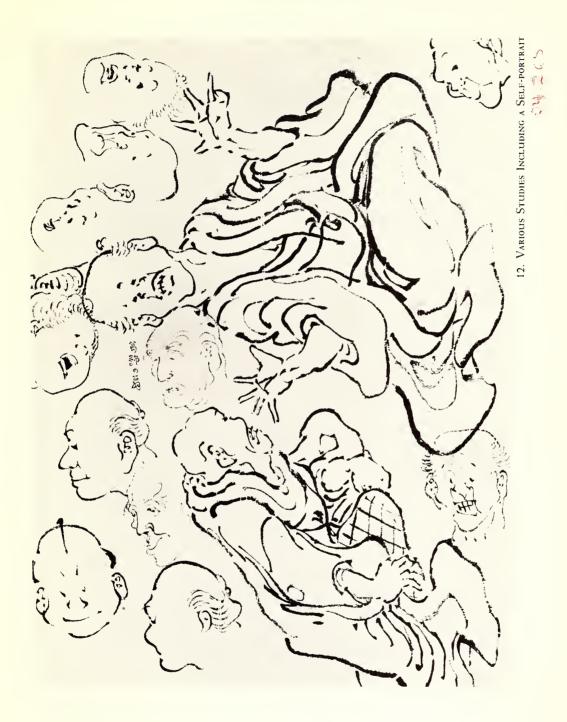
9. Miscellaneous Studies



10. A SHINTO RITUAL



04.175 11. MOUNT FUJI AND ENOSHIMA



21

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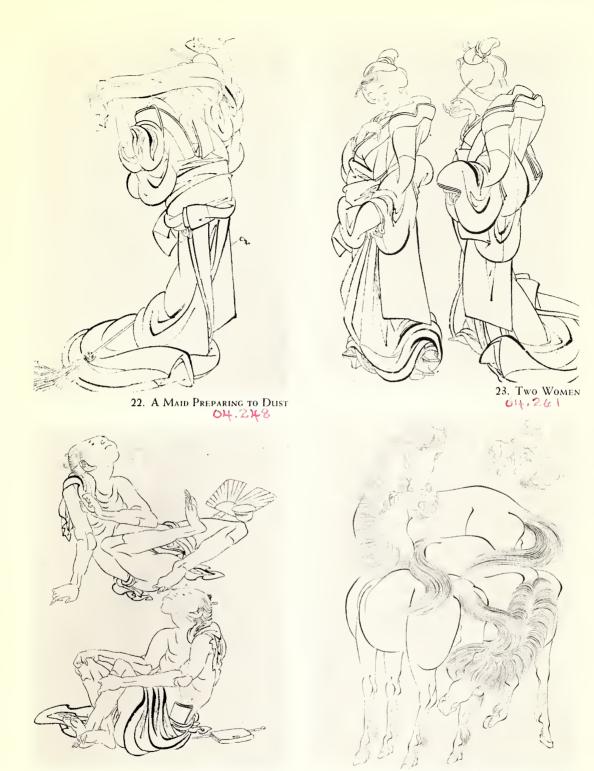




20. Shōjō—A Drunkard Proving His Strength 04.2 55



21. MAN AND BOY



24. SUMMER RELAXATION

04. 7 57 25. Horses



One Hundred Poems of the Master



POETS AS RELATED BY A WET-NURSE



04-180 31



30-31. The Twelve Months



04.180 31



04.204 32



04.205

34

33













IN HONOR OF THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF

THE BIRTH OF HOKUSAI AND THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF UNITED STATES-JAPANESE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

THE FREER GALLERY OF ART

OF

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

PRESENTS

SELECTED WORKS BY

KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI

(1760-1849)



WASHINGTON 1960

GALLERY IV.

GALLERY V.

WEST CORRIDOR.

	Paintings		Paintings
98.110	Mount Fuji Ink and color on silk 144" x 2015"	04.135	Fudð Ink and color on paper 35g'' x 11 fg''
00.47	The Thunder God Ink and color on paper 48g x 19g	04.142	Legendary Figures Ink, color and gold on silk 151%" x 67"
02.2	Cherry Blossom Viewing Ink and color on silk 1418" x 2518"	04.177	A Shinto Ritual Color, ink and gold on paper Two-fold screen 64" x 65%"
02.3	Miscellaneous Scenes Ink and color on paper Two-fold screen (Each half) 27 ^f / ₈ " x 31 ^g / ₈ " Miscellaneous Studies Ink and color on paper 10 ⁴ " x 45' 5 ^f / ₈ "	04.178	Miscellaneous Fans Color, ink, and gold and silver on paper Two-fold screen Right half: 16%" x 31" Left half: 16%" x 31"
		04.181	A Fisherman Ink and color on silk
02.254	Crustacea Ink and color on silk 23ई " x 18ई"		$44\frac{7}{6}'' \times 15\frac{7}{16}''$
03.52	New Year's Ritual Ink and color on silk 45% " x 17%"	04.182	A Wood Gatherer Ink and color on silk 44g" x 15xg"
03.53	New Year's Ritual Ink and color on silk 45½" x 174e"	04.184	Court Ladies Ink and color on silk 40%" x 15g"
03.109	A Ferry Boat Ink and color on silk 33%" x 16%"	04.188	The Six Master Poets Ink and color on paper 12वे" x 22 फ्रै
03.128	Courtesan Writing Color, ink and gold on silk 3448" x 1248"	05.276	Waves Ink and color on paper 49§" x 1838"
03.129	Courtesan Ink and color on paper 27]\$"x9]*"	54.119	Courtesan Making a New Year Visit Ink, color and gold on silk 44" x 16g"

	Screens		Screens		Drawings
02.48	Country Scenes Ink, color, and gold on paper Six-fold screen, pair with 02.49 663″ x 12′ 2§″	04.179	The Twelve Months Ink and color on paper Six-fold screen, pair with 04.180 71" x 12' 43"	04.73	Courtesan Ink and color on paper 15%" x 8%"
02.49	Country Scenes Ink, color, and gold on paper Six-fold screen, pair with 02.48 663" × 12' 23"	04.180	The Twelve Months Ink and color on paper Six-fold screen, pair with 04.179 7018" x 12' 5"	04.210	Burning a Buddhist Image Ink and color on paper 7g" x 117g"
03.143	A Picnic Party Ink and color on paper	04.204	Six Views of the Tama River Ink, color, and gold on paper	04.211	Pomegranates Ink and color on paper 718" x 1118"
	Six-fold screen, pair with 03.144 58쇼" x 92ۀ"		Six-fold screen, pair with 04.205 68§" x 12' 5§"	04.214	The Calligrapher Ink and color on paper 12fe" x 8f"
03.144	A Picnic Party Ink and color on paper Six-fold screen, pair with 03.143 S8♣ " x 92§"	04.205	Six Views of the Tama River Ink, color, and gold on paper Six-fold screen, pair with 04.204 68§" x 12' 5"	04.215	A Cloth Merchant Ink and color on paper 1018" x 848"
04.175	Landscape: Mount Fuji and Eno- shima Ink and color on paper Two-fold screen, pair with 04.176 644" x 62"	06.233	Landscapes of the Four Seasons Ink, color, and gold on paper Six-fold screen, pair with 06.334 714" x15' 38"	04.220	A Theatrical Character Ink and color on paper 718" x 10%"
04.176	Landscape: Mount Fuji and Eno- shima Ink and color on paper	06.234	Landscapes of the Four Seasons Ink, color, and gold on paper	04.221	Miscellaneous Studies Ink and color on paper 67" x 9 %"
	Two-fold screen, pair with 04.175 64¥" x 62 <u>¥</u> "		Six-fold screen, pair with 06.233 71″ x 15′ 3½″	04.232	Man and Boy Ink on paper 1218" x 818"
				04.233	Laborers Ink on paper 9륜" x 12월"
				04.234	The Lion Dance Ink on paper 10§" x 14 ⁺ 8"
				04.241	Tuning the Samisen Ink on paper 9 ³ / ¹¹ x 8 ¹ / ₄ ¹¹

ings		Drawings
lor on paper "	04.244	Peasant and Noble Ink on paper 10 ¹ / ₂ " x 14 ² / ₈ "
uddhist Image lor on paper "	04.245	Miscellaneous Figures Ink on paper 1218" x 94"
s olor on paper "	04.248	A Maid Preparing to Dust Ink on paper 12g ² " x 9"
pher plor on paper "	04.251	A Sake Bout Ink on paper 10 t ² a" x 15"
cchant olor on paper a."	04.254	Boy with a Flute lnk on paper $4\frac{1}{2}^n \ge 6\frac{1}{4}^n$
Character olor on paper _{Ba} "	04.255	Shôjō—A Drunkard Proving his Strength Ink on paper 12g ^m x 6g ^m
s Studies olor on paper	04.256	Girl and Cat Ink on paper 9 ¹⁸ " x 7 ² "
Dy per	04.257	Horses Ink on paper 14fs" x 10fs"
per 3″	04.2 61	Two Women Ink on paper 12 ² / ₃ " x 9 ³ / ₃ "
ance per 18″	04.268	Various Studies including a Self- Portrait Ink on paper 13" x 9 18"

uisen 04.269 S

04.269 Summer Sake Sippers Ink on paper 9§" x 12§"

WEST CORRIDOR.

	Drawings		Drawings
04.273	Travelers Ink on paper 12½" x 9½"	07.553	The Poems of One Hundred Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse
04.274	Miscellaneous Figures Ink on paper 13" x 9 ³ / ₈ "	07.558	The Poems of One Hundred Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse
04.277	Summer Relaxation Ink on paper 12 ³ / ₈ " x 9 ¹ / ₄ "		Ekei Hõshi Ink on paper 14 ^g ″ x 10″
04.278	Woodsmen Ink on paper 12½" x 9½"	07.572	The Poems of One Hundred Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse- Shun'e Hōshi Ink on paper 14 ⁵ / ₈ " x 10"
04.27 9	Seated Man <i>Ink on paper</i> 4 ⁵ / ₅ " x 6 ⁵ / ₈ "		
04.413	A Spirit from the Hyaku Monoga- tari Ink on paper 12 ¹ / ₂ " x 10"	07.574	The Poems of One Hundred Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse Jakuren Hôshi Ink on paper 14 [§] " x 10"
07.548	The Poems of One Hundred Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse Kisen Hôshi Ink on paper 14§" x 10"	07.575	The Poems of One Hundred Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse
07.551	The Poems of One Hundred Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse Bun'ya no Yasuhide Ink on paper 14§" x 10"	07.579	The Poems of One Hundred Poets as Related by a Wet-nurse- Junii Ietaka Ink on paper 14 [§] " x 10"

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